TL 156-12

RIGHT OF REPLY BY THE INDONESIAN DELEGATION ON ITEM 10

Mr. Chairman,

In response to references made by certain representatives on the human rights situation in Indonesia, in particular in Aceh and East Timor, without wishing to be repetitious, my Delegation would like to restate the following :

The allegations regarding Aceh are merely paraphrases of a circular by the so called "Acheh/Sumatra National Liberation Front", a European-based separatist group who launched a politically motivated attack against Indonesia by quoting data which was baseless and unsubstantiated, in such a way as to give the impression that the Province of Aceh has been turned into a "killing field". This group has attempted to claim credit for the security disturbances of a criminal band which heightened its activities from the end of 1989 to mid last year. What occured in Aceh was that armed criminals spread terror and intimidation which caused disturbances and social unrest. To mention but a few, their brutal acts took the form of ambushes of public transportation, the burning of villagers' houses and educational institutions, and killing innocent civilians. These occured after the local authorities took a stringent measures to eradicate the cannabis cultivation. Against those background the Indonesian authorities was forced to take action to restore peace and public order and to protect the safety of the general public. Furthermore, in such a critical situation it was justified for the people to defend themselves from violent acts which endanger their lives.

As the above evidence proves, there is a thin line between the attempts of some organisations to incite rebellion and the genuine concern for human rights. The tendency of a number of organisations is to blame the government first, instead of viewing the whole situation in its context.

The Commission on Human Rights is the main body within the United Nations system with a clear mandate to deal with human rights issues. The Commission, therefore, and any other UN bodies for that matter, should not be used to accomodate the political aspirations of those whose intention is to disintegrate the national unity and territorial integrity of an independent and sovereign state.

There is nothing new in the allegations that thousands of people have been killed, tortured or summarily executed in Aceh, and we have always refuted these in the past. These allegations were also communicated to the human rights monitoring bodies of the Commission last year. As part of its policy of cooperating fully with the Commission on Human Rights, the Government of Indonesia has duly submitted its substantive response to the respective bodies. The results of the proceedings of the Working Group on Communications which also considered the matters is known to the members of the Commission.

Mr. Chairman,

Allegations have also been levelled that detentions, torture and disappearances occured in 1989 and 1990 in East Timor. In addition, it was also underlined that there is a pattern of short term detentions. This is certainly a convenient way of making allegations without attempting to substantiate them with specific proof or evidence. Far from having any systematic strategy of silencing opposition, the local law enforcement authorities have always upheld the procedures of Indonesian Criminal Law while questioning, making arrests and detaining suspects.

The local authorities have taken the necessary measures with regard to the few officials who have not complied with procedural law, in the form of disciplinary action, including dismissal from service. This was clearly stated by the Governor of East Timor

in his statement before the Indonesian Parliament on 14 February 1991.

As in the past, small demonstrations were staged in the month of September/October. Far from being peaceful demonstrations, a small number of youths assaulted two police sergeants, burned their motorcycle, and threw stones at passersby. Such actions are punishable by the Criminal Law and justifiable and necessary legal procedures were undertaken.

As in previous cases, the decision of the Working Group on Communications concerning allegations of detention and torture during the year under review is known to the members of the Commission. Moreover, the report of the Working Group on Disappearances clearly indicated that during the period under review (1989-1990) there were no new cases of disappearance in Indonesia.

The most recent pictures of the situation in East Timor were presented by the members of the Australian Parliamentary Delegation and of the World Council of Churches Representative early this month. A member of the Australian delegation, Mr. MacDonald, made it clear that the visit aimed to closely observe the situation in the Province, in order to find out whether there was any truth in the allegations that the human rights and the political aspirations of the people were not duly respected. During his visit, he became convinced that the allegations were baseless. A representative of the World Council of Churches, Johan Frits, who visited three regencies and held talks with a number of local authorities, including Bishop Belo, repeatedly praised the Indonesian Government for its unremitting efforts to increase the standard of living in East Timor. He told reporters that the situation in East Timor is very different from the image which was presented by newspapers and magazines abroad and he critized the unbalanced reporting on East Timor.

Thank you Mr. Chairman